

Stelliferous

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****This is a one-shot from Definitions. However, there are not a lot of attention going to that story. I wanted to highlight this one in particular. It contains characters from all seasons, with vague spoilers.****

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><p>Definitions for Stelliferous

Having or abounding with stars

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><p>The old man leaned heavily on his cane. It had been many years since he could walk unaided. Far more than that since he could run, let alone ride his beloved bike. His hair, once dark and striking, was now laced with silver.<p>

The air was fresh. The sun was shining. The old man chuckled. His friends would have liked that. They would have liked the warm summer day. Of course, he couldn't visit all of his friends. Their places were spread out too far for him to accomplish that.

He took comfort in what he could do. The grass bent silently under his feet, cushioning the impact. A soft breeze blew against his wrinkled face. Rows upon rows of stones marked where other people's friends had been put to rest.

He shuffled towards a small pond. That's where some of his friends lay.

His knees begged him for a rest. Obliging, he sat down on a wooden bench across from the seven stones he had come to visit. They were not his friends, but his family.

His head bowed in respect as he thought of their journeys.

Margaret Eppes. She had passed away when he and his brother were young. They had been devastated. The two brothers, already distant, drifted apart even further.

He smiled a sad smile at that. It had taken a long time, but he and his brother had managed to put aside their differences in order to stop a criminal. That was decades ago, but he remembered it like it was yesterday. His brother had gotten home from work and left his papers and maps on the table. He, being the curious little brother he was, had unrolled one of the curled maps and proceeded to try to help his brother. His brother had been angry, until their father had convinced him that he could help. That was the start of a work relationship, and the restart of their personal relationship. Because of his interaction with Don's work, he had made new acquaintances and friends.

They had formed a small band of crime fighters. Members arrived and they left, but the Eppes family was the center of it all. Even when he had left with his wife to England, they had kept in touch with their friends. They had spent a few years in England, but they decided that they missed their familial interactions far too much to stay. So they came back.

The group had grown old.

Alan was the first. He had passed quickly and quietly. He went to sleep and slipped up to heaven. Instead of repeating their behavior from when they had lost their other parent, the brothers grew even closer.

Colby was second. He had gone in a less peaceful way. He had gone on an assignment with the army and he never came back. The official statement was that he had died a hero, losing his life by saving others. They had been crushed, David most of all. They were not currently partners, but they were still best friends.

Liz was third. She had been working a case undercover in a drug operation, and the mark had panicked and started shooting up the place. She was mortally wounded, and died with her friends and family gathered around her bed.

Larry was fourth. He had been ill for a long time. Cancer. This time, though, Charlie was ready for him. He had not drawn back into his shell, instead choosing to stay by his mentor's side until he joined Alan.

Ian was fifth. He had simply stopped communicating. Four months later, he was declared KIA. They held a small memorial, where they reminisced about him.

Terry was sixth. She had been shot protecting her partner, who survived. They flew down to DC to see her funeral.

Megan was seventh. Charlie had never lost touch with her, sending

emails to see how she was doing. She emailed him and told him about her serious medical condition. She had two options: have a risky surgery or continue to live with her condition. She told him that she was going to have the procedure, and she wanted them to come and say goodbye. They went. They had tearfully said their goodbyes, just in case she never woke up. They waited during her long surgery. It had been successful, but by a hair. Her heart had stopped, and had needed to be revived. The doctors put her into a medically induced coma. She never woke up. Her family let her go after two months of waiting.

Amita was eighth. She had taken their three year old son to the playground when a teenager had lost control of his car. They were both declared dead upon arrival. They never got to say goodbye. Don supported him through this dark time.

Robin was ninth. Along the way, she and Don had married. He could remember their wedding. It was a joyous occasion, with much laughter and love. Two years after they got married, Robin became pregnant. She gave birth to a healthy baby girl. When her daughter was nine years old, Robin had to go into court. She was prosecuting a mob boss. His accomplices had stormed the courtroom, slaughtering everyone in their path. Charlie supported Don and his daughter as best as he could.

David was tenth. He was stabbed while interviewing a suspect, and died of his injuries shortly after. Don and Charlie were there to comfort him while he passed.

Don's daughter was eleventh. She had grown up to be an FBI agent, just like her father. She was taken from them by an escaped convict who was seeking revenge. She was hit by a car and never recovered.

Now it was just Charlie and Don. Two old men. Two brothers. Their hair was now gray. Their faces were wrinkled. They had lived and they had suffered together.

Then it was just Charlie. Don had slipped away, just like Alan. Peacefully.

So here he was, paying respect to his family's graves. Margaret, Alan, Amita, his son, Robin, Don's daughter, and Don. His stone would soon be added. The aches in his bones would see to that.

He was ready. He had spent so long apart from them that he would give anything to see them again. Somehow he knew he would. So many bright souls could not be diminished. They were there, watching over him in the great, dark sky. They shone brightly down on him, reminding him that there was a reason that he was still here while they were up there.

The old man smiled gently. He would wait. He would do as much as he could to honor all of his fallen friends. The seven stones marked where their bodies were, but not their spirits. He had never believed the "nonsense" about souls and spirits when he was younger. But, age changes a man. It had certainly changed him.

So for now, he would be content with seeing his loved ones in the sky. He would watch them and yearn for them until it was his turn to

take his place among the stars.

The lights of the dark.

End
file.